1.2 Brief Overviewof the Karo/Rawa Language

The Rawa language has 24 letters in its alphabet consisting of six vowels: *a, e, i, o, oo,* and *u*: and eighteen consonants; *b, d, g, h, k, l, m, mb, n, nd, ng, ngg, p, r, s, t, w, and y.* The *oo* letter represents the backed /O/ phoneme or the [au] sound.

In the Rawa dialect there are no voiced stops—only aspirated and unaspirated voiceless stops. Thus the *p, t, k* letters represent the aspirated voiceless stops and the *b, d, g* letters represent the unaspirated voiceless stops. The /r/ phoneme freely alternates with /l/ phoneme according to the speaker's discretion.

In the Karo dialect, the *b, d, g,* represent voiced stops. The Karo people tend to use a much higher percentage of the /l/ phoneme and the Rawa people use the /r/ phoneme more.

All the prenasalized stops *mb, nd, ng, ngg* and the vowel *oo'* each pattern together as a single phoneme.

Stress in the Karo/Rawa language is phonemic and therefore non-predictable. The primary stress always occurs on either the first or second syllable. The secondary stress occurs two syllables after the primary stress. In the example below, the primary and secondary stress will be capitalized to show where they occur and the syllables will be separated by a '.' .

(1)

ga.NA.ye.Roo.te	'he is deceiving them'
WE.ngge.Re.ngge.re	'to trip'

There are two basic syllable patterns: vowel (V) and consonant vowel (CV). In the initial syllable of a word, either V or CV may occur; elsewhere only CV. Two vowels may not occur contiguously in a word. In the examples below the words are divided into syllables with the use of a '.' and the functors are separated with a hyphen '-'.

(2)

V	CV
U.	*-te*
go.down	-prt.3s

'He is going down.'

V	CV
a.	*wa*

'father'

CV	CV	CV	CV	CV
Ga.	*na.*	*-ye.*	*roo.*	*-te.//*
deceive	-them	-prt.3s		

'He is deceiving them.'

Toland, Norma R. and Donald F. 1991. Reference Grammar of the Karo/Rawa Language. Ukarumpa: Summer Institute of Linguistics.